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*L'Indo-Chine française.* Par J. L. DE LANESSAN. Paris, Felix Alcan, 1889. — 8vo, 756 pp.

There is no more important political question in Europe than whether France is to remain one of the great powers. She has already passed through many periods of depression and emerged more powerful than before. If she now possesses less influence in Europe than she had fifty years ago, this may show only a period of weakness and not a period of decadence. At all events, the nations who wish to remain the great powers of the world feel the necessity of extending their dominion beyond European limits. With a population that is nearly stationary, no nation seems more in need than France of new territory over which her language and civilization may spread.

M. de Lanessan has written an instructive book about the French possessions in Indo-China. He has described the condition of the people, the extent of their trade and their relations with the French with great fulness, with great fairness and at great length. In Cochin-China, Camboja, Annam and Tonkin, there are 18,000,000 natives who in a greater or less degree are subject to the rule of France. The French administration has not been wholly successful, but it is too soon to pronounce any definite judgment upon its character. The protectorate of France has been acknowledged in most of this great region for less than twenty years. Cochin-China alone has been organized as a French province. The other states are under that ambiguous control which usually ends in the inferior race becoming wholly subject to the government of the more powerful one. The climate of Indo-China is such that a large European population will not reside there. Europeans will be sojourners, as the English are in India, and not emigrants and settlers as they are in Australia. But the soil of some portions, especially in Cochin-China, is fertile; and if roads could be built, forests cleared and swamps drained, all these countries are susceptible of a large development in trade, wealth and population. Thus far, the progress which should result from the influence of a more civilized people has been but moderate. The entire exports in 1887 were only about \$12,000,000, and over four-fifths of these came from Cochin-China. With a population of less than 2,000,000 her imports and exports far exceed those of Annam and Tonkin with 16,000,000 of people. The most discouraging feature is that the totals, in 1887, were less than in 1885. While taxes grow larger, trade remains stationary. The French themselves secure only a small portion of this commerce. Of the imports into Indo-China for 1887 less than one-fifth came from France. Over all this country the Chinese spread themselves, seizing the trade from those who cannot compete with them either in activity or economy. They are looked

upon with no friendly eyes by French and English competitors, but still they come and prosper. They lend money to the farmers at thirty per cent; they keep gambling houses, in which prostitutes meet their victims, servants waste their wages, and officials squander the funds in their charge; they sell goods cheaper than their rivals, and they exhibit that combination of energy, shrewdness and viciousness for which they are pre-eminent wherever they find a footing in Europe, Asia or America.

The chief evil in the French administrators, according to our author, is that they seek to intrude the customs and the laws of their own country with too little attention to the habits, the prejudices and the superstitions of those under their rule. Like the French philosophers of the last century, they refuse to recognize the infinite differences in manners and morals among different classes and races of men. They wish the natives to become civilized Parisians, while these prefer to remain ignorant Annamites. The missionaries desire to make the inhabitants Christians, and they have a strong preference for remaining heathen. Hence the feelings and prejudices of the natives are wounded; and the Frenchman, who might be regarded as a benefactor if he would confine himself to improving roads and enlarging trade, is regarded as an oppressor when he snubs a mandarin and lights his pipe in a pagoda. Such evils always attend the meeting of a higher and lower civilization, and time alone can determine whether the French occupation of these populous countries will result in the mutual advantage of the invaders and the invaded.

JAMES BRECK PERKINS.

*La France provinciale: vie sociale, mœurs administratives.* Par RENÉ MILLET. Paris, Librairie Hachette et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1888. — x, 330 pp.

At a time when the political future of France is viewed with distrust by almost every observer; when her last experiment in government seems about to succumb to the same untoward fate that has overtaken all her experiments for a hundred years, it is, to say the least, extremely refreshing to meet any one — especially a Frenchman — who has faith in his country's political capacity, and a strong belief that, under all the apparent disturbance and disorder of the present, there is a powerful current in France in the direction of peaceful government and orderly administration. This belief is held by M. Millet, and he has written *La France provinciale* to express it. The text of the entire work is that "Paris n'est pas la France," and that in French provincial life are to be found the reserves of strength which will ultimately save the country from the excesses of the capital. M. Millet examines one by one the elements which go to make up "la vie provinciale" and, by an analysis